M&G NSW 2022 SECTOR CENSUS

Preliminary findings

The 2022 Sector Census took place between August and October 2022.

The Museums & Galleries of NSW 2022 Sector Census survey was sent to 508 organisations which covered 319 community run and managed museums, 57 public and regional museums, 39 public and regional galleries, 46 community managed galleries and artist run initiatives, 8 Artspace's, 14 University Galleries and 25 Aboriginal cultural organisations.

These findings are based on 240 complete responses.

The full report will be published in the first half of 2023.

Types of organisations

Of the completed responses 55% identify as a museum, 14% as a heritage organisation, 9% as a museum & heritage organisation, 14% as a gallery, 5% as a museum & gallery and 5% as an Aboriginal cultural organisation.

COLLECTION

91% of all respondents manage a collection.

Cataloguing and Digitisation

49% of respondents have partially catalogued their collections, 41% have completed and 10% with no cataloguing, which is up from 7% in 2013.

15% are currently not using any form of collection management system.

The majority of organisations that manage a collection have partially digitised it 63% with another 10% having completed the digitisation of their collection.

Of the 27% who have not begun the digitisation process 75% identified lack of funding, lack of training and/or lack of confidence as being barriers to their organisation engaging digitally.

Risks to Collections

The Census found that 45% of the sector stated that they have urgent and/or long-term building maintenance issues impacting the safe storage of their collections. Of this 45%, almost half said the threats to their collections include urgent issues such as leaks and structural damage.

56% identified climate or disaster related issues/risks that did not include building issues such as leaks or rising damp.

Only 5% of respondents who manage a collection indicated there were no current risks to their collection.

STAFFING AND RESOURCES

Only 42% of respondents have paid staff, with the remaining 58% operated entirely by volunteers.

Volunteers

Most organisations 93% have volunteers, with only a small portion 7% operating with paid staff only

Volunteers are utilised across a range of roles and in every facet of operations.

69% rely on volunteers to ensure the organisation is open and staffed.

59% are involved in collection care including cataloguing and digitisation

49% see a fall in retaining volunteers as a risk to their collection

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Funding

Outside of Government agency funding, self-generated income is the primary source of income with 56% using entry fees and 48% membership fees as a common income stream. Private benefaction is also a major form of income with 36% reporting it as a source.

20% cite local government funding as the primary source of their operational funding.

47% listed a lack of funding as a threat to their collection

SUSTAINABILITY

More than half of organisations reported that they are currently pursuing environmental sustainability through a range of initiatives. 34% report sustainable energy programs including 29% of organisations who have solar panels. 19% have water use reduction measures in place such as rain water tanks and grey water recycling. 23% of organisations have waste reduction initiatives.

42% of organisations do not currently have any sustainability measures in place or planned.

OPENING HOURS

Organisations are most commonly open weekly for 3 or less days per week, 55%. 33% of respondents are open more often, between 4 and 7 days. 5% reported they were not currently open to the public.

COVID IMPACTS

M&GNSW continues to monitor the operational effects that the pandemic has exacted on the sector.

Organisations reported that they were closed for an average of 15 weeks or 29% of their last 12 month reporting period.

Operating hours due to COVID

When asked if they were open more or less following the lockdowns, the majority answered, 72% are operating about the same hours as prior to the pandemic, around 21% said they were open less and 7% opening more hours.